

Economic Wellbeing in Merton

Working Together – Better Together



From the Joint Chairs of the Economic Wellbeing Group

“ I am a firm believer that people like to work locally in their own communities. In my role as Chief Executive of Merton Chamber of Commerce, I am well positioned to work with employers and support local people in getting local jobs. Many employers support my own view that a key requirement for being offered employment is having the right attitude and aptitude, and people can lack the soft skills that employers want. In times of austerity and in a small borough such as Merton we have to fight our own corner and we can only do that through collaboration and making the Merton case.

Since 2012, the Economic Wellbeing Group has been building London's skills base and supporting business, which is also a key aim for London's Enterprise Panel, the GLA and the South London Partnership. Working in partnership and using a model such as ours, we can all achieve more for the benefit of local business and local people.



Diana Sterck
Chief Executive
Merton Chamber
of Commerce

“ It is an exhausting joy to chair the EWG meetings: always a packed agenda and a packed room full of ideas. I am immensely proud of the additional funding that we, together, have levered into the borough, as a result of our consolidated efforts, but more than that, the underlying motto for me is: "Local people, local skills, local jobs". This works at the macro- and micro-economic level: common sense, backed by the actions of local, committed and experienced people, together with a clear focus on full collaboration.



Naomi Martin
Director
Commonsense Community
Development Trust

“ I joined the EWG because, as Housing portfolio holder on the Cabinet, I knew that the best way of keeping Merton's tenants housed was for them to be working. The EWG does that: it's a fantastic partnership which brings people to employment and fits them to jobs. It's a privilege to be part of something that works so well.

Councillor Nick Draper
Cabinet Member for Community and Culture



About Merton's Economic Wellbeing Group

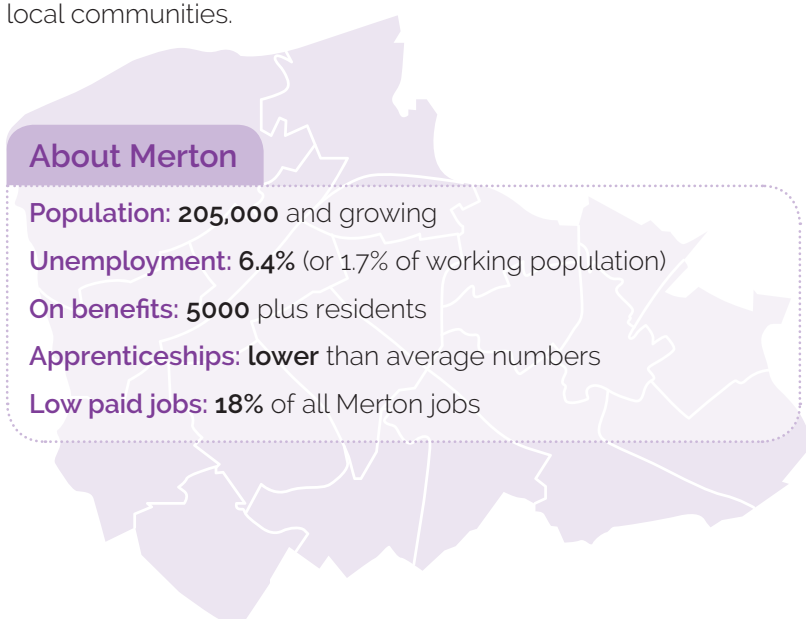
London Borough of Merton's Economic Development Strategy (2012-2017) set out a vision for supporting economic growth, by increasing jobs and skills. A sub group of the Merton Partnership was formed with the aim of working towards economic wellbeing for all Merton's residents and went on to influence and shape the London Borough of Merton's Employment and Training Action Plan which was published in 2012. The Plan provided a framework for the Council and its partners on the Merton Economic Wellbeing Group (EWG) to address the worklessness and skills challenges in the borough.

The Economic Wellbeing Group (EWG) is now an established part of the employment and skills landscape in Merton. During the first year of its existence it grew rapidly and attendance now stands at an average of 20 or so people.

There is a strong consensus amongst stakeholders that the EWG is an effective group that has provided an effective forum to bring together different partners to work together. The EWG is valued as a source of regular information from partners and as a platform for developing joint funding bids.

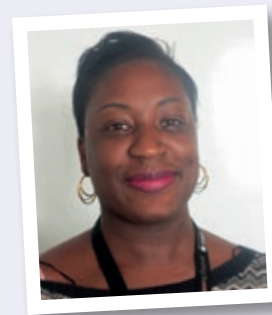
In 2015 the Group reviewed its progress and refreshed its Action Plan, which now embraces all age groups within the borough, with a strong emphasis on links with business to provide jobs, work experience, mentoring and volunteering opportunities.

Merton Voluntary Services Council has recently set up a training, employment and enterprise forum as a sub-group to hear, understand and respond adequately to the needs of local communities.



Residents are at the forefront of everything the EWG does. By improving local skills and employment initiatives we are able to assist our residents into employment and training opportunities with some great stories highlighted within this publication.

The group works extremely well together and have achieved so much in the past 4 years; we look forward to being able to continue assisting Merton residents to achieve their goals.



Joyce Ogunade
Employment
and Skills Officer



The first thing I did

when I started my role was to meet with partners to understand how I could work with them to improve Merton's economy. It was so clear that we were all doing amazing things for our residents through skills and employment initiatives. Everyone said "we don't share ideas or talk enough". So, I went about building relationships and set up a regular meeting. I am proud to say that as partners we have achieved so much in the last 4 years and wanted to share it with you.

Sara Williams

Programme
Manager for
Business and
Economy
futureMerton



futureMerton

Partners involved In the Economic Wellbeing Group

Capital Training Group

Capital Training Group is an award winning training provider based in Wimbledon Park. We offer Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships in Business Administration, ICT and Sales. We pride ourselves on the pastoral support and mentoring we give to our Apprentices. Wherever possible we ensure that Apprenticeships lead to sustainable employment with an 87% success rate for Apprentices staying in employment following the completion of their Apprenticeship.

www.capitaltraininggroup.co.uk



Circle Housing Merton Priory

Circle Housing Merton Priory (CHMP) is part of the Circle Housing Group. As a social housing provider, CHMP is aware that a disproportionate number of its customers are unemployed in comparison to those who rent privately. Just 44% of social housing tenants have a job, compared to 69% of those who rent privately (Demos, 2012). Circle Housing's mission to Enhance Life Chances means that employment and skills programmes are integral to us delivering our mission.

www.circle.org.uk/merton-priory



Commonside Community Development Trust

Commonside Community Development Trust is a social enterprise based in East Mitcham. The Trust runs the busy New Horizon Centre, a community centre in Pollards Hill, as well as Step Forward, supporting local parents, and the Lunch Club for Older People, promoting independent living. The New Horizon Centre hosts over 90 groups every week with a weekly footfall of 2,000 people.

www.commonside.net



Delrose Earle Training

Delrose Earle Training is a not for profit organisation committed to providing highly customised learning solutions for clients that lead to improved economic wellbeing for individuals. A female led organisation, we deliver both accredited and customised non-accredited accessible courses and we have a proven track record of meeting and exceeding targets and supporting individuals in achieving seismic shifts, both personal and professional.

www.delroseearle.com



Grenfell Housing and Training

Grenfell Housing and Training works with vulnerable people in South West London, providing housing, training and support through periods of crisis to help them make the transition to independence. Operating from two sites in Merton, we deliver training for tenants and other local people including accredited and certified courses in ICT, English and Maths alongside workshops and employability skills training.

www.grenfell-housing.co.uk



Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus have an office in Mitcham and have been strong supporters of the work of the group since its inception, linking clients who are seeking work and those on other benefits to support them in their journey towards economic wellbeing.

www.gov.uk



London Borough of Merton

London Borough of Merton draws membership from across the Council – including the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture; Adult Education; Children Schools and Families; My Futures; Public Health; Housing; HR; and Future Merton team, all working to support the local community towards economic wellbeing. The My Futures community team works with young people aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training with an aim to support and facilitate a young person to enter education, employment or training and sustain their placement.

www.merton.gov.uk



Merton Adult Education

Merton Adult Education is committed to equipping individuals with the skills, qualifications and confidence to compete in the employment market and improve their economic standing. MAE delivers employability, personal and social development, and functional skills programmes to learners. We can prepare people to become work ready through work related, personal and social development activities for progression into employment. From August 2016 MAE moves to a commissioned based delivery model.



www.merton.gov.uk/adulteducation

Merton Chamber of Commerce

Merton Chamber of Commerce is the largest local Chamber of Commerce in London. With 600 members and over 3000 business customers our business is driven by customer needs and the desire to make Merton a great place to do business and to work. Our commitment to our local borough is fundamental to who we are and what we do, and we deliver many services to connect local people to local employers.



www.mertonchamber.co.uk

Merton Voluntary Services Council

Merton Voluntary Services Council works to support, enable and champion the voluntary, community and faith sectors in Merton. Since mid 2014 Volunteer Centre Merton has been part of MVSC. We work with a large number of partner organisations and play a pivotal role in multi-sector partnership, exemplified by the Merton Compact which has stood the test of time and has been recognised nationally by the numerous Compact Awards for partnership, leadership, excellence, impact and more.



www.mvsc.co.uk

MOAT

MOAT is a housing association and not for profit organisation employing over 300 people and providing affordable homes in thriving communities for people in the South East. For over forty years, we've delivered high quality general needs homes for affordable rent, retirement housing, and independent living, and we have a strong affordable home ownership offer. We develop around 500 new homes every year.



www.moat.co.uk

South Thames College

South Thames College has provided education and vocational training for over a century. We are a further education provider for 16-18 year olds and adults over 19, through full and part time education and training, community learning, ESOL and family learning, adult skills, all age apprenticeships, traineeships and employability programmes. We have 3 sites and deliver a lot of what we do in partnership.



www.south-thames.ac.uk

Training and Recruitment Partnership

Training and Recruitment Partnership is an independent learning provider based in Mitcham, Surrey. We deliver mostly apprenticeships, and a small amount of traineeships, in London, the south east of England and some nationally. Our learners have a positive attitude to learning, enjoy their programmes and make good progress: TRP aims to enhance the opportunities and development of all our learners and is committed to raising standards in adult learning and helping young people into employment.



www.trpltd.co.uk

Wandle

Wandle supports people across South London who need a home and we have over 7000 homes across nine boroughs. We provide homes for rent (social and affordable), shared ownership, outright sale and supported housing. We have provided hundreds of new homes both for people who are in the most need of housing and those who would otherwise not be able to afford their own home.



www.wandle.com

Work readiness



The mobile training and engagement bus owned and run by Delrose Earle Training. Commissioned by CHMP to deliver mobile job clubs in Merton.

Routes2Work

Open to Merton residents, Circle Housing Merton Priory (CHMP) provides employment related short courses and job brokerage to maximise opportunities for participants. There is also training and support to those wanting to start their own business or social enterprise.

Job Clubs deliver advice and support with job search, applications and preparing for interview. Job Club Plus specifically supports people with disabilities or long-term health conditions. CHMP commission a range of partners to deliver the Routes2Work programme such as Delrose Earle Training CIC, Groundwork London, Balance Support and Grenfell Housing & Training. In 2015 Routes2Work helped 120 local people into work.

Ocado – a truly employer-led solution

When Grenfell Housing & Training heard that Ocado were recruiting up to 200 customer team members (delivery drivers with a difference) to work locally we wanted to get involved.

In partnership with the London Learning Consortium, Job Centre Plus and other local organisations, we put together a programme with Ocado to deliver ICT, numeracy and literacy, customer service and retail, employability skills and finally, driving skills.

All 62 people taking part in the programme completed, more than 50 people had an interview with Ocado and over half found employment either with Ocado or in similar jobs.

Many of those securing interviews were in their late forties or fifties and freely admitted that they'd given up all hope of getting a job.

Errol's story – Merton Adult Education

“ I left school at 15 with no education and I decided it was time I did something about it. I saw a leaflet regarding learning to better your education at Whatley Avenue college.



So in no time I rang the college and signed up. At the age of 48 I was enrolled at Entry 3 after being assessed. Since then, I have reached Level 2 English & Maths, I am so pleased with how much I have learned. I now have a job with Ocado training new recruits and providing buddy training to them.



Right attitude and aptitude

In late 2015 Merton Chamber of Commerce put forward a partnership tender to the Department for Work and Pensions to use their Flexible Support Fund to support 60 unemployed residents get and move towards employment.

Stepping outside the usual job-readiness training, our approach is gaining real commitment from the client to getting a job and working with them on a one to one or small group basis to improve their confidence and skills in interviews to influence an employer to take them on. Working with Delrose Earle, Grenfell and Commonsense this project strongly links community to business.



Linda King, the Chamber's Business Adviser, with Michael Brown

Volunteer as a route to employment



Fayre & Square's shop in Centre Court, Wimbledon

Fayre and Square, based in Wimbledon Centre Court Shopping Centre, is MVSC's supported volunteering and employability project. It is a community shop that provides volunteering support, training placements and group sessions to people with a learning disability and/or mental health issue and those facing other significant barriers to employment.

Participants engage with local independent artisans selling their products in the shop and receive training in all aspects of retail and customer service as well as boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

Fayre and Square April 2013 – December 2015

- 43** Supported placements
- 15** progressing onto additional placements
- 12** placed by Employment Support Services
- 16** Supported Volunteers into employment include: WHS, Independence Homes, Harvester, London Transport, Odeon Cinema, Asda, Premier Inn, Shoe zone, Marks and Spencer.



Supporting local employers

Take One Take One started in 2013 as a campaign to local employers in the London Borough of Merton. Realising that Merton Chamber of Commerce had a trusted relationship with many local businesses, Diana Sterck – the Chief Executive, used the Chamber’s communications and relationship with local employers to ask them to step up and support young people into work. She set a challenge for employers to ‘Take One’ young person – to provide a work placement, an internship, a traineeship, an apprenticeship or supporting a volunteer placement or through mentoring a young person.

The response has grown over time and funding secured through a variety of sources.

Over
100
apprentices in
2 years

With the support of Merton’s local partners, Merton’s campaign to support young people has really taken off. The model was seen to be so successful it has been replicated in 7 London boroughs and used as part of a national on line tool kit to support training providers.

Merton Chamber, as a local employer, led the way through offering the first ‘Take One’ apprenticeship and the 100th ‘Take One’ apprenticeship.

Merton Council has 44 apprentices in 22 different sections. In 2016 Take One has been expanded to support people of all ages.



Apprentice Jamie Gorman, of Gina Conway Aveda Salons and Spas with Linda King, Take One Manager from Merton Chamber of Commerce

Apprenticeship Staff Support Programme

During October 64 people attended 4 workshops in East, North, West and South London, introducing them to an ‘Online Toolkit’ developed by Merton Chamber of Commerce and Capital Training Group to share our model of good practice for employer engagement in Apprenticeships.



The toolkit was one of 14 national projects managed by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, funded by the Education and Training Foundation.

The toolkit was designed to help staff of colleges and training providers in London to secure and develop SME involvement in Apprenticeships. The project aim was to support staff working in the sector to engage effectively with employers and to help partners in London to establish partnership working to improve employer engagement and increase the number of Apprenticeship places.

The online resources can also be used as a ‘stand-alone’ resource to help improve employer engagement skills. The online resources present our good practice tips, along with case studies and video interviews of Merton partners who share their experiences. There is also an Action Plan to download for staff to plan and set targets for their own organisation improvement.

www.takeonetoolkit.com

Business awards has tasteful start

For two years running South Thames College's Taste restaurant has played host to the launch event of Merton Chamber of Commerce's business awards.

The awards, which celebrate businesses from all over the borough, include categories such as the coveted Business of the Year award, Best New Business and Best Apprentice of the Year.

Jamie Stevenson, Director of Business Partnerships at South Thames College, said, "This event demonstrates South Thames College's commitment to supporting the local business community and allows us to reflect and celebrate the many successes within the borough."

www.south-thames.ac.uk



Top right: (l-r) Sue Rimmer OBE, Principal and CEO of South Thames College, Diana Sterck, Merton Chamber of Commerce CEO and Jamie Stevenson, Director of Business Partnerships, South Thames College

Bottom right: Presentation of awards at Merton Best Business Awards



Above: New apprentice Rhian (right) gaining valuable office experience

Right: Rhian with Julie

Apprentice into Recruitment!

Julie Rose set up Rhodium Consulting in May 2010 following a long and successful career in both temporary and permanent recruitment across multiple disciplines. Rhodium started out in Julie's home office and by 2013 she had moved into the Generator Business Centre in Mitcham, where she appointed a staff member who worked from home. Now, Rhodium has 4 full time staff, has offered work experience and now has a new apprentice – Rhian, who was recruited through Capital Training.



Julie says there are numerous benefits to taking on a young person, "It's good to have a young person to compliment the team who are all more senior. The young person has new ideas, no preconceived ideas and brings new skills into the business."

Employability

Self-employment success

Keith Venus, Wandle resident, recently completed an Institute of Leadership and Management course and is using the skills he acquired to grow his business, Intra Dog Care. The course was provided by Wandle through their enterprise programme which helps residents start or scale up their businesses.

What does the future hold? Keith said "I'm training now in canine psychology and I want to fully establish my business next year, and take things to the next level. I don't want to be rich, just able to pay my own way. And I want to get my own dog!"



Keith Venus, Wandle resident, completed the enterprise programme



www.wandle.com/get-involved

“The training Wandle provided really helped with the most crucial part: creating a business plan template. I've talked to other dog walkers who say 'I don't need a business plan', but I knew I did, because the plans I have are not stereotypical ones – there are niches in the market that haven't been touched that I want to tap into.”

Keith Venus, Wandle resident

Meeting employer demand

A number of the country's biggest construction companies met with current and former students looking for work in the building trade at a special event hosted by South Thames College.

With a range of big budget infrastructure projects going on around London there is a huge demand for skilled workers, so our College Business Centre focused on matching learners with the right companies to find out what opportunities are open to them.

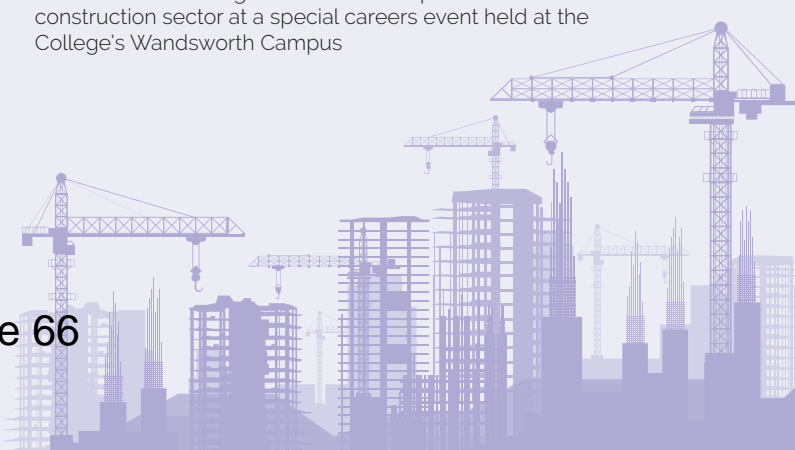
Using our key contacts at big firms like Thames Tideway Tunnel, Carillion Building and Battersea Power Station, this was a serious chance for students to get into work after their studies.

Karan Jay, the Business Centre's training and quality manager, said, "The event was a great opportunity for our students and those who have just graduated to see what jobs are out there and to hear what skills companies are in need of."

www.south-thames.ac.uk



South Thames College students met representatives from the UK construction sector at a special careers event held at the College's Wandsworth Campus



Confidence is key

When an 18 year old male was referred to our service in December 2015, I found him to be very low in confidence and had given up searching for work. He had been regularly knocked back and couldn't understand why. I was concerned that he was suffering from depression, due to how isolated he was and negative about his prospects. As the sessions went on he began to come out of his shell and make huge progression. He was able to secure an apprenticeship run by UK power networking doing joinery and wiring, and was grateful to them for helping him "view things differently" and "giving him the confidence again". He is a completely different person from when we first met in his appearance and personality.



Gareth Plumb
My Futures Community Team Keyworker

What next?

In 2015 Circle Housing was part of a successful London Housing Consortium bid to secure European Social Funding. The funding awarded will deliver a 3 year programme of employment training and support to 377 unemployed and inactive residents.

LBM commissioned a number of specific initiatives to support 160 residents into work/training. This covered support for ex offenders and the long term unemployed, support for those over 50 years of age, and IT skills programme.



Trip to Westfield Job Fayre – Supporting Merton residents to access jobs and employers

Our combined activities target a 1.7% reduction

in local unemployment

Working Together – Better Together

